



U.S. Office of Special Counsel  
1730 M Street, N.W., Suite 218  
Washington, D.C. 20036-4505

## OSC TRANSMITS VA REPORT CONFIRMING MISTREATMENT OF PATIENTS AT PRESCOTT MEDICAL CENTER

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**CONTACT: Darshan A. Sheth, (202) 254-3617; [dsheth@osc.gov](mailto:dsheth@osc.gov)**

WASHINGTON, DC/April 8, 2010 – Today, the U.S. Office of Special Counsel (OSC) transmitted to the President and Congress the Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) response to whistleblower allegations of patient abuse and neglect, medical errors, unsanitary and unsafe conditions, and records falsification at the Bob Stump VA Medical Center, Prescott, Arizona (the Medical Center). The whistleblower, Jerri Bedell, a former Registered Nurse at the Medical Center, alleged that staffing shortages contributed to the poor conditions at the facility.

The VA report and supplemental report found that VA employees committed medical errors, including the overuse of laxatives and the misuse of narcotics. The reports also substantiated Ms. Bedell's allegations that the Medical Center had problems sustaining staffing ratios and did not have adequate housekeeping services.

To correct the deficiencies, the Medical Center has implemented safeguards to ensure appropriate administering and monitoring of narcotics, laxatives, and other medication, revised the assessment and documentation process for patient admission, and provided additional training for medical staff. Furthermore, a palliative care physician was engaged to review patient care at the VA and to provide consultative services. Additionally, the Medical Center has pledged to monitor sanitation practices and report their findings to the VA's oversight committee for infection control. OSC determined that the agency's reports contain all of the information required by statute and the findings appear reasonable.

A copy of the transmittal to the President, the agency's reports and Ms. Bedell's comments have been placed in OSC's public file and is now available online at [www.osc.gov](http://www.osc.gov).

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*The U.S. Office of Special Counsel (OSC) is an independent investigative and prosecutorial agency and operates a secure channel for disclosures of whistleblower complaints. Its primary mission is to safeguard the merit system in federal employment by protecting federal employees and applicants from prohibited personnel practices, especially retaliation for whistleblowing. OSC also has jurisdiction over the Hatch Act and limited jurisdiction over the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act. For more information please visit our web site at [www.osc.gov](http://www.osc.gov) or call (800) 872-9855.*